


7-1993

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Aubrey Immelman

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, aimmelman@csbsju.edu

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Recommended Citation

Immelman, A. (1993). *A Millon -based study of political personality: Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk. Part I: Method and preliminary results*. Paper presented at the 16th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Cambridge, MA, July 6–11, 1993.

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A Millon-Based Study of Political Personality:

Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk

Part I. Method and Preliminary Results

Aubrey Immelman

Department of Psychology
Saint John's University
Collegeville, MN 56321-3000

Telephone (612) 363-3198
Fax (612) 363-3202
Internet aimmelman@csbsju.edu

Paper presented at the Sixteenth Annual Scientific Meeting
of the International Society of Political Psychology

Cambridge, MA

July 6-11, 1993

Acknowledgment. I wish to express my gratitude to Deon Geldenhuys of Rand Afrikaans University and Hennie Kotzé of the University of Stellenbosch for their assistance.

Abstract

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Part I. Method and Preliminary Results

Aubrey Immelman
Saint John's University
Collegeville, MN 56321-3000

This paper reports the method and preliminary findings of an investigation of the political personalities of South African president F. W. de Klerk and African National Congress president Nelson Mandela. The purpose of this study was to assess the utility of Theodore Millon's personological model as an alternative or supplementary conceptual framework and methodology for the assessment of political personality. *Conceptually*, the investigation was conducted from the perspective of a model of personality compatible with Axis II of DSM-III-R, which serves as an important psychodiagnostic frame of reference for the practice of contemporary psychiatry and clinical psychology. *Methodologically*, the investigation involved personality appraisals at a distance, using an instrument adapted by the present investigator from the work of Millon and his associates.

Introduction

The final decade of the millennium was heralded by political events of global significance — events that have stimulated renewed academic interest in the personal roles played by high-level leaders in shaping political outcomes. Accordingly, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 the personality of Saddam Hussein became the subject of intense speculation (e.g., Parson, 1991; Post, 1991). Likewise, Mikhail Gorbachev, 1990 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition for his personal initiatives in the Soviet Union, attracted similar interest from political psychologists (e.g., Winter, Hermann, Weintraub, & Walker, 1991). In South Africa, F. W. de Klerk's assumption of the state presidency in September 1989 was followed almost immediately by far-reaching reforms (including the February 1990 release of Nelson Mandela). Not surprisingly then, De Klerk and Mandela also have entered the political-psychological literature of the nineties (e.g., Geldenhuys & Kotzé, 1991; Glad & Blanton, in progress; Kotzé & Geldenhuys, in progress).

As stated by Hermann (1974, p. 201), a pivotal issue in the study of political personality is the difficulty of conducting an accurate personality assessment. Aside from its controversial nature (see Winter et al., 1991, pp. 218-219), the study of political personality at a distance is complicated by the proliferation of competing theoretical systems and methods (see Immelman, in press). This problem

is compounded by the fact that, in comparison to psychiatry which in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III-R; American Psychiatric Association, 1987) possesses a standard taxonomy for the identification and classification of personality disorders, there is far less consensus among political psychologists concerning political personality types. I have addressed this problem elsewhere (Immelman, 1988, 1989, in press), advocating the adaptation of Theodore Millon's (1969, 1981, 1986a, 1986b, 1990, 1991; Millon & Everly, 1985) model of personality as a psychodiagnostically coherent alternative to existing conceptual frameworks and assessment methodologies for the study of political personality. The purpose of the present paper is to present a Millon-based study of the political personalities of South African leaders Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk in an attempt to illustrate in concrete terms the utility of Millon's model in the field of political personality.

Background to the Study

Millon's Model of Personality

A comprehensive review of Millon's personological model and its applicability to political personality can be found in Immelman (in press). The following account, of necessity brief, does not do justice to Millon's model but will suffice for the present purposes.

In terms of Millon's model, which synthesizes the formerly disparate fields of psychopathology and normatology

(see Millon, 1991, pp. 356-357), personality disorders are simply "exaggerated and pathologically distorted deviations emanating from a normal and healthy distribution of traits" (Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 34). From a practical perspective, this *syndromal continuity* perspective is of particular relevance to the study of political personality because it allows one to anticipate high-level leaders' personality functioning under various contingencies, for example, persistent or severe situational stress that may contribute to a deterioration in psychological functioning (see Immelman, in press).

Millon's framework is particularly useful in that it provides a theoretically validated taxonomy of personality patterns compatible with the syndromes described on Axis II of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III-R) of the American Psychiatric Association (1987). As I have stated elsewhere (Immelman, in press), "no present conceptual system in the field of political personality rivals Millon's model in compatibility with conventional psychodiagnostic methods and standard clinical practice in personality assessment."

Attribute domains. Millon specifies eight enduring (stable) and pervasive (consistent) personality attributes. These eight attribute domains (dimensions) are summarized in Table 1 along with brief descriptions.

Table 1
Millon's Eight Attribute Domains

Attribute	Description
Expressive behavior	How the individual appears to others; characteristic behavioral acts or appearance
Interpersonal conduct	How the individual typically interacts with others
Cognitive style	Characteristic nature or content of the individual's thought processes
Mood/temperament	How the individual typically displays emotion; affective expression
Self-image	The manner in which the individual appears to see him- or herself or overtly describes him- or herself
Regulatory mechanism	Characteristic ego-defense or coping mechanism in dealing with conflict or stress
Object representations	The residue of significant past experiences, composed of memories, attitudes, and affects that underlie the individual's perceptions of and reactions to ongoing events
Morphologic organization	The strength, congruity, and efficacy of the personality system

Note. Adapted from *Personality and Its Disorders: A Biosocial Learning Approach* (p. 35) by T. Millon and G. S. Everly, Jr., 1985, and *Toward A New Personology: An Evolutionary Model* (chap. 5) by T. Millon, 1990. Copyright to both works by John Wiley.

The Millon Personality Diagnostic Checklist (MPDC; Millon, Tringone, Sandberg, Bockian, Millon, Patterson, Green, Blum, & Antoni, in press) assesses only the first five of these attributes, characterized by Millon (1990, p. 157) as essentially "noninferential" (i.e., relatively amenable

to direct observation); regulatory mechanism, object representations, and morphologic organization are omitted from the assessment. *Regulatory mechanism*, according to Millon (1990), is difficult to discern yet "extremely useful in a comprehensive personality assessment" (pp. 146-147). *Object representations*, not at all amenable to external observation, would be practically impossible to infer at a distance. Similarly, *morphologic organization* is, according to Millon (1990), "impossible to observe directly and difficult to infer" (p. 157). These three attributes are therefore also excluded from the assessment instrument constructed for the purpose of the present investigation.

Fortunately, accurate personality classification does not require a comprehensive assessment of all eight attribute domains. As suggested by Millon (1990, p. 160), "a narrower scope of attributes than desirable" can still be "sufficient to provide a reasonably comprehensive picture" of an individual's major characteristics. As stated by Immelman (in press) "a valid personality assessment can be conducted on the basis of any subset of selected attribute domains; increasing the number of attribute domains merely increases the reliability of the assessment."

Personality patterns. Millon's taxonomy of personality types consists of eight basic personality patterns forming the basis for eight normal personality patterns with 13 pathological variants, for a total of 21 personality types (see Table 2) in the full taxonomy.

Table 2

*Millon's Classification of Basic Personality Patterns
with Normal and Pathological Variants*

Basic pattern	Normal range	Mildly disturbed	Severely disturbed
Active-independent	Forceful	Antisocial Sadistic	
Passive-independent	Confident	Narcissistic	Paranoid
Active-dependent	Sociable	Histrionic	
Passive-dependent	Cooperative	Dependent	Borderline
Active-ambivalent	Sensitive	Passive-aggressive Self-defeating	Borderline
Passive-ambivalent	Respectful	Obsessive-compulsive	Paranoid
Active-detached	Inhibited	Avoidant	
Passive-detached	Introversive	Schizoid	Schizotypal

Each personality type is characterized by a specific criterion (diagnostic feature) within each of the eight attribute domains, allowing for the differential diagnosis of these personality types. Theoretically, there is thus a total of 168 criteria (21 personality types x 8 attribute domains). The identifying criteria linked to the "normal" (well-adjusted) range of Millon's eight basic personality patterns are specified in Table 3. The table is limited to the five most easily observable attribute domains.

As will be seen in the following sections, the current study represents the third phase in the present investigator's development of a strategy for applying Millon's personological model to the study of political personality.

Table 3

Multidimensional Criterion List for Normal Personality Styles

Personality pattern	Expressive behavior	Interpersonal conduct	Cognitive style	Mood/temperament	Self-image
Forceful	Adventurous	Intimidating	Subjective	Anger	Assertive
Confident	Poised	Unempathic	Imaginative	Serene	Confident
Sociable	Animated	Demonstrative	Superficial	Dramatic	Charming
Cooperative	Docile	Compliant	Open	Tender	Weak
Sensitive	Erratic	Unpredictable	Divergent	Pessimistic	Unappreciated
Respectful	Organized	Polite	Circumspect	Restrained	Reliable
Inhibited	Watchful	Shy	Preoccupied	Uneasy	Lonely
Introversive	Passive	Unobtrusive	Vague	Bland	Placid

Note. Adapted from *Personality and Its Disorders: A Biosocial Learning Approach* (p. 35) by T. Millon and G. S. Everly, Jr. Copyright 1985 by John Wiley.

Pilot Study 1: MPDC Appraisal of P. W. Botha

As a preliminary step in the development of a Millon-based conceptual framework and methodology for the study of political personality, a pilot study (Immelman, 1988) was conducted in 1987, in South Africa. The political personality of P. W. Botha, South African president at the time, was selected as stimulus object for testing the assessment strategy. Conceptually, the assessment of personality was approached from the perspective of mainstream psychodiagnostics, involving the personality patterns derived from Millon's biosocial-learning approach. Methodologically, the investigation involved ratings by South African clinical psychologists on an early research version of the Millon Personality Diagnostic Checklist (MPDC), a personality rating scale designed by Millon and Green (1987) to be compatible with Axis II of DSM-III. Questionnaires were mailed to 220 (45%) of the 494 full members of the South African Institute

for Clinical Psychology. Respondents rated Botha on the basis of their personal understanding derived from Botha's numerous public statements and intensive media exposure over the years, using their clinical judgment and drawing from their background in the assessment of personality. Fifty-five usable questionnaires (25%) were returned.

Quantitative analysis revealed predominantly aggressive (sadistic), narcissistic, antisocial, paranoid, and compulsive features (refer to Table 2), though none of the elevations were in the disturbed (pathological) range. Qualitative analysis of the data yielded a character description quite consistent with Geldenhuys and Kotzé's (1985) analysis of Botha's personal political style in terms of Hermann's (1978) conceptual scheme. The major conclusion of this study (Immelman, 1988) was that the MPDC showed "some promise for the indirect personality assessment of political leaders," but that the ultimate objective "should be the development of a questionnaire more specifically tailored to the assessment of relatively nonpathological, political personality."

Pilot Study 2: MPPC Reanalysis of MPDC Appraisal of Botha

In response to the need for a less clinically oriented political personality assessment instrument, the present investigator compiled a research instrument (provisionally dubbed the Millon-Type Political Personality Checklist; MPPC) based on the work of Millon and his associates (Millon, 1969, 1986b; Millon & Everly, 1985). As a preliminary test of this

instrument, it was used as a tool for reinterpreting the results of the Botha study (Immelman, 1988). Equivalent MPPC alphanumeric code equivalents to MPDC appraisals of Botha are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

MPPC Equivalents of MPDC Items: P. W. Botha

Item No. ^a		MPPC	Item content
1987	1994		
27	24	A2bc	Acts arrogantly self-assured and confident
125	113	B1bc	Intimidates, coerces, and demeans others
8	7	A6b	Maintains regulated and highly organized lifestyle
14	12	A9e ^b	Strongly resists external influence and control
91	81	C1bc	Is close-minded, dogmatic, and prejudiced
132	120	B6c	Insists others do things his/her way
16	14	A9d	Is highly defensive and vigilant
42	N/A	D5c	Quick to be annoyed or disappointed in others
57	49	D9d	Is quick to take personal offense
47	40	D1b	Reacts to criticism with rage or shame
167	152	E2b	Has sense of high self-worth
7	6	B5c ^c	Is uncooperative, contrary, and stubborn
13	11	D1a	Has sudden, unexpected outbursts
38	34	A9e ^b	Scans environment for potential threats
130	118	B9d	Carries grudges, does not forgive insults

^a Item numbers in the 1987 column refer to their serial position in the research version of the MPDC (Millon & Green, 1987) actually used in the study; item numbers in the 1994 column refer to their corresponding serial position in the published version of the MPDC (Millon et al., in press).

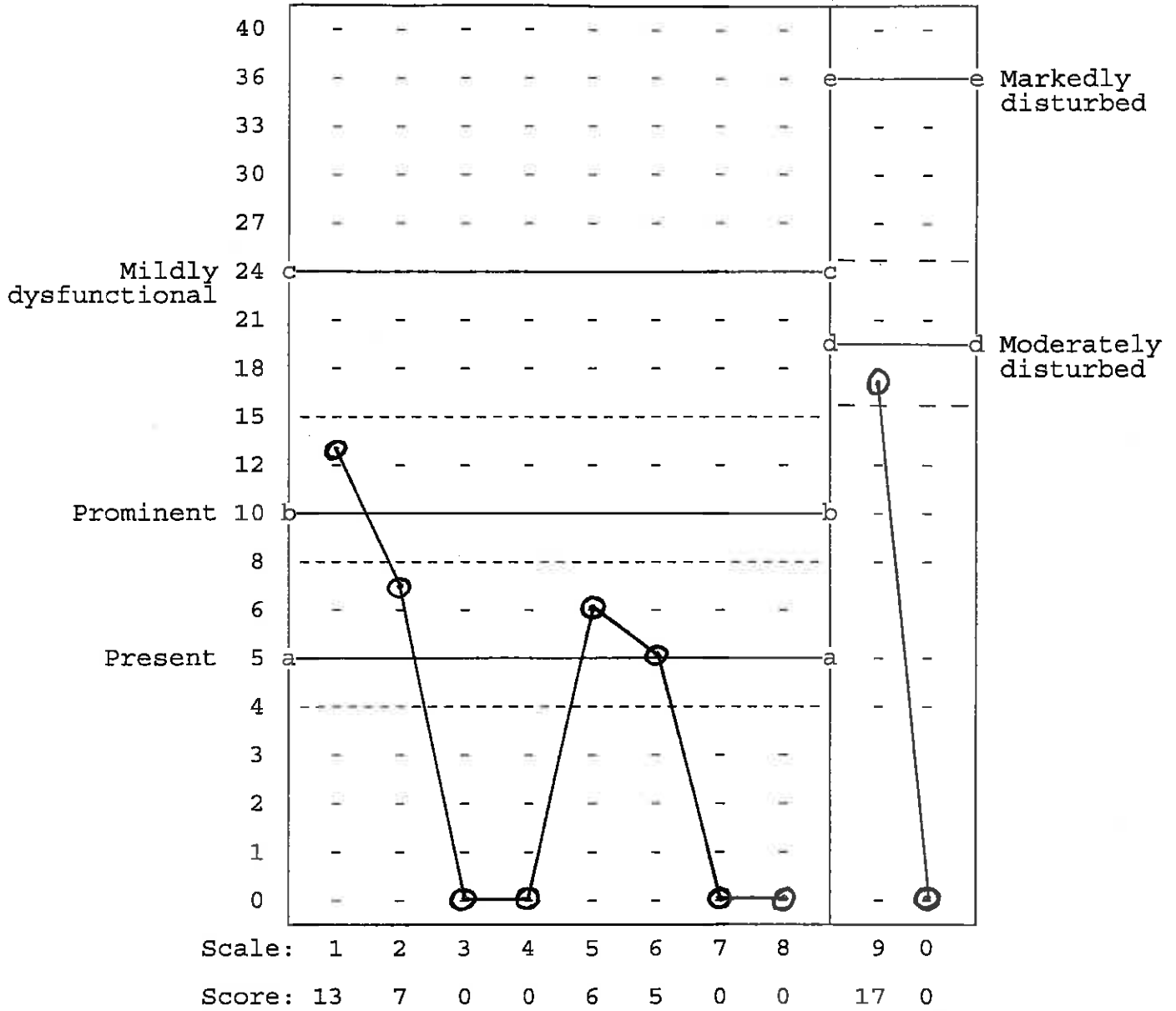
^b MPPC category A9e occurred twice but was scored only once.

^c MPPC category A5c also applies but was not scored.

Botha's personality profile, based on the MPPC alphanumeric codes reported in Table 4, is depicted in Figure 1. In terms of the interpretation strategy outlined in the MPPC Preliminary Manual (Immelman, in progress-b), the profile suggests an Aggressive (elevated Scale 1) personality with distinct Suspicious (though not quite

Figure 1

MPPC Profile: P. W. Botha
(Based on data from Immelman, 1988)



MPPC Scales

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Controlling/Active-independent | 6 Conforming/Passive-ambivalent |
| 2 Asserting/Passive-independent | 7 Hesitating/Active-detached |
| 3 Outgoing/Active-dependent | 8 Retiring/Passive-detached |
| 4 Agreeing/Passive-dependent | 9 Distrusting |
| 5 Complaining/Active-ambivalent | 0 Erratic |

Paranoid) features (elevated Scale 9) and secondary Confident (Scale 2), Sensitive (i.e., reactive; Scale 5) and Respectful (Scale 6) features. Loadings on Scales 3 and 4 (suggestive of sensitivity to others) are notably absent, suggesting a very self-oriented individual.

Present Study: MPPC Appraisal of Mandela and De Klerk

The present study constitutes the third pilot study in the development of a Millon-based conceptualization and methodology for the assessment of political personality.

Method

Materials. The research instrument was a preliminary version of the Millon-Type Political Personality Checklist (MPPC), compiled by Immelman (in progress-b) from the published work of Millon and his associates (Millon, 1969, 1986b; Millon & Everly, 1985).

Sources of data. The MPPC-based appraisals were independently conducted by two South African academics with recognized expertise in the study of political personality. Although it is not possible to provide a complete catalog of the basis for their appraisals, the following factors are deemed relevant:

1. Both Mandela and De Klerk have maintained a very high public profile since at least 1990; their intense media coverage has provided numerous samples of observable behavior.
2. Both appraisers have had the opportunity to personally interview Mandela and De Klerk.

3. Both appraisers have access to or are familiar with a broad range of published sources of information pertaining to Mandela and De Klerk. Published materials pertaining to Mandela and De Klerk include biographies (e.g., De Klerk, 1991; Geldenhuys & Kotzé, 1992; Meer, 1988), documentaries (e.g., Gralnick, Friedland, O'Neil, Swafford, & Benjamin, 1990), and scholarly analyses (e.g., Geldenhuys & Kotzé, 1991; Kotzé & Geldenhuys 1990). In addition, there has been extensive coverage of Mandela and De Klerk in print and broadcast media in South Africa.

Procedure. The two appraisers were asked to use the MPPC to rate Mandela and De Klerk, drawing from their expertise in the area of political personality and their knowledge of the subjects.

Treatment of the data. The completed checklists were scored by the present investigator, using the scoring strategy explicated in the MPPC Preliminary Manual (Immelman, in progress-b). A few of the MPPC categories were difficult to judge, resulting in appraisals such as "at times" or "perhaps." In scoring these items, responses were weighted at half their nominal quantitative value (e.g., 0.5 point for a 1-point item). Finally, the scored data were plotted on the profile form provided in the manual.

Results

MPPC appraisals for Mandela and De Klerk are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

MPPC Scale Scores for Mandela and De Klerk

Scale	Rater A		Rater B		Mean	
	Mandela	De Klerk	Mandela	De Klerk	Mandela	De Klerk
1	6	5	4	3	5	4
2	6	5	4	6	5	5.5
3	8	5	3	3	5.5	4
4	3	3	1.5	1.5	2.25	2.25
5	3.5	3.5	7	1	5.25	2.25
6	10	8	9	7	9.5	7.5
7	0	0	1	1	0.5	0.5
8	1.5	0	3	0	2.25	0
9	5	0	2	0	3.5	0
10	9	0	0	0	4.5	0

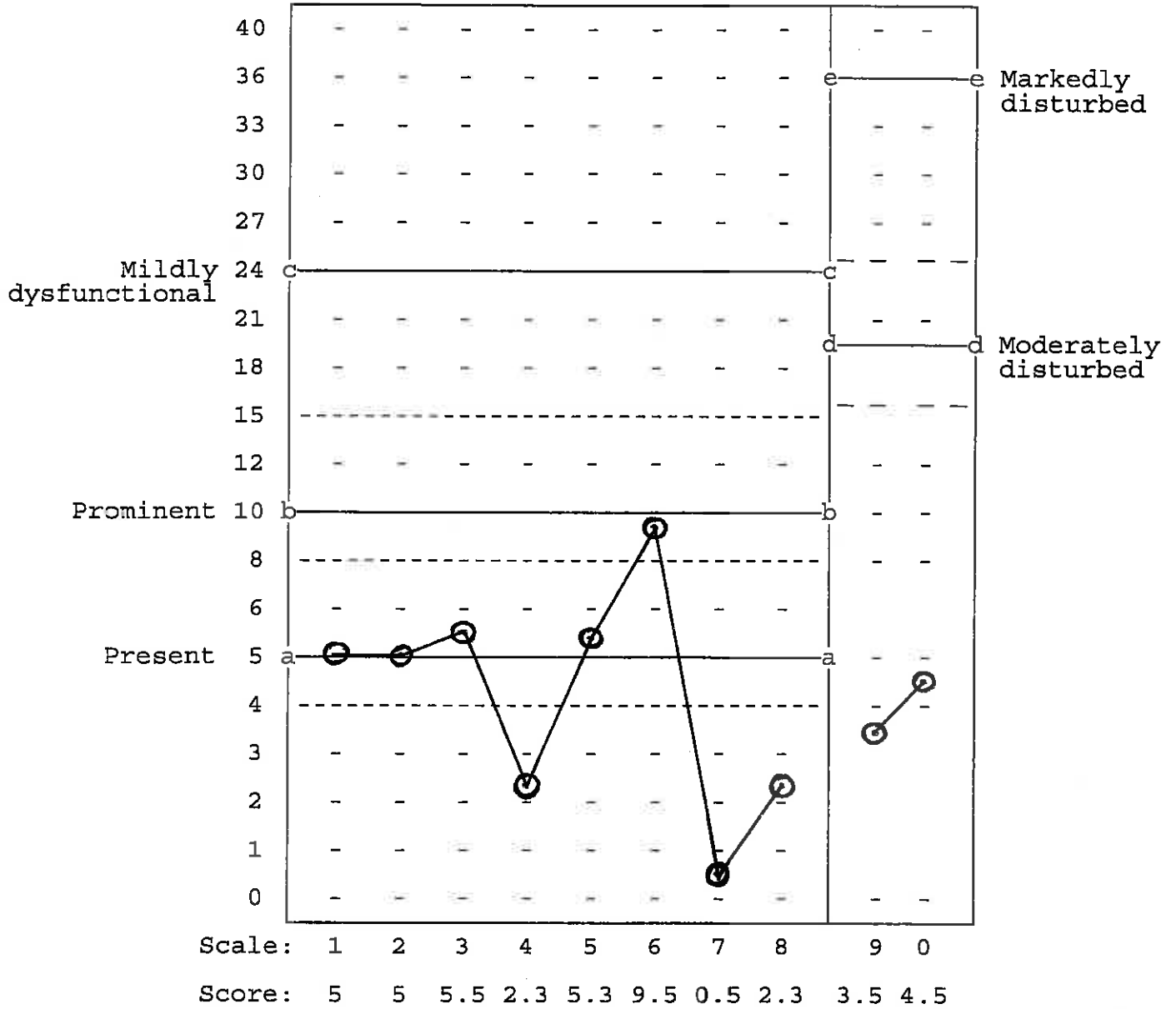
The MPPC profiles for Mandela and De Klerk constructed on the basis of the mean scores of the two raters are presented in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Discussion

The personality profiles for Mandela and De Klerk, depicted in Figures 2 and 3, are remarkably similar. In terms of the interpretation strategy outlined in the MPPC Preliminary Manual (Immelman, in progress-b), both leaders are appraised as functioning within the normal range; there are no clinically relevant profile elevations. The most elevated scale for both leaders is Scale 6, in a range that would characterize both as Respectful personalities (see Appendix; refer also to Table 2). Slight elevations on Scales 1, 2, and 3 for both leaders suggest the secondary presence of traits associated with Forceful, Confident, and Sociable personalities (see Appendix; refer also to Table 2).

Figure 2

MPPC Profile: Nelson Mandela

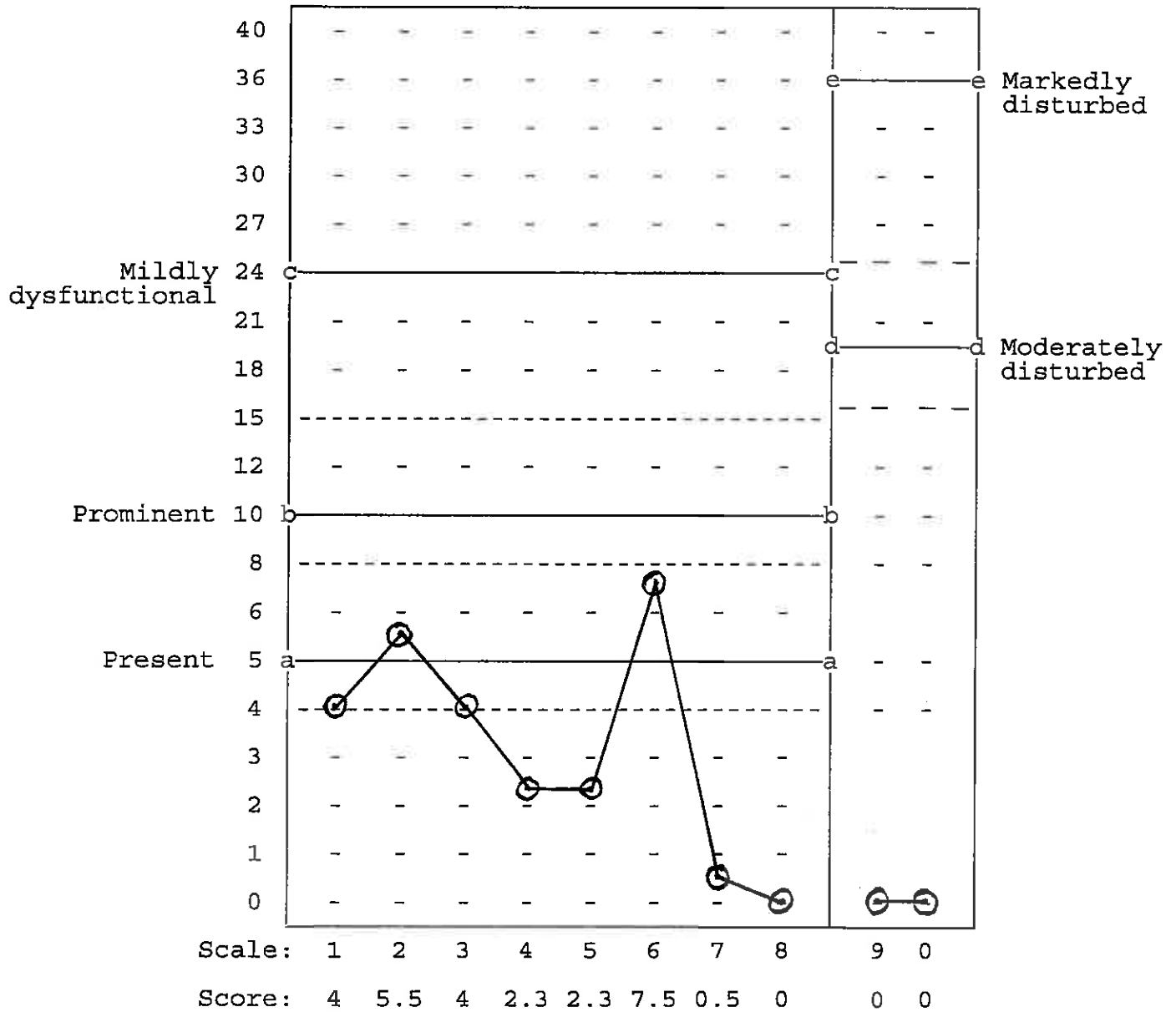


MPPC Scales

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Controlling/Active-independent | 6 Conforming/Passive-ambivalent |
| 2 Asserting/Passive-independent | 7 Hesitating/Active-detached |
| 3 Outgoing/Active-dependent | 8 Retiring/Passive-detached |
| 4 Agreeing/Passive-dependent | 9 Distrusting |
| 5 Complaining/Active-ambivalent | 0 Erratic |

Figure 3

MPPC Profile: F. W. de Klerk



MPPC Scales

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Controlling/Active-independent | 6 Conforming/Passive-ambivalent |
| 2 Asserting/Passive-independent | 7 Hesitating/Active-detached |
| 3 Outgoing/Active-dependent | 8 Retiring/Passive-detached |
| 4 Agreeing/Passive-dependent | 9 Distrusting |
| 5 Complaining/Active-ambivalent | 0 Erratic |

There are two differences that may be diagnostically meaningful in the profiles of the two leaders. First, Scale 5 suggests the presence of Sensitive (i.e., reactive or negativistic; refer to Table 2) features for Mandela but not for De Klerk. Second, it is noted that Mandela, but not De Klerk, has slight loadings on Scales 9 and 0. Though these loadings are not clinically meaningful they need to be further investigated.

As a final observation, the personality profiles of both Mandela and De Klerk are remarkably different from that of P. W. Botha. In terms of the South African political context a comparison of De Klerk and Botha is of primary interest. Based on their respective MPPC profiles the major difference between these two leaders is that De Klerk lacks the aggressiveness and suspiciousness of Botha and is moderately other-oriented, in contrast to Botha's strong self-orientation.

Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a brief, tentative psychological assessment of the personalities of the two foremost political players involved in the challenging process of shaping the "new South Africa," namely Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk. A more extensive analysis is currently under way (Immelman, in progress-a).

Though more work remains to be done, it appears that the MPPC shows generally more promise than the MPDC in the field of political personality (though the latter would be quite

appropriate for appraising leaders who show signs of psychological disturbance). It should also be noted that a forthcoming Millon instrument geared specifically to the assessment of "normal" personality, the Millon Index of Personality Styles (Millon, in press), is likely to be of value to political psychologists interested in using Millon's system for the study of political personality.

Finally, it should be emphasized that adequate understanding and accurate prediction of political behavior demands an accurate grasp of relevant contextual and role-related variables that may modify the expression of political actors' personality attributes. The present analysis, based as it is on Millon's personological model, informs only the *personal characteristics* part of the equation that in Hermann's (1987) model shapes leaders' orientation to political affairs — that is, their predisposition to political activity. Applying our understanding of these characteristics to the prediction of actual political behavior therefore requires, in addition to the present analysis, an examination of the background or contextual factors that serve as filters for the political expression of leaders' idiosyncratic personality characteristics.

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APPENDIX

Millon-Type Political Personality Checklist

Scales

The 10 MPPC scales represent eight basic personality patterns and two derivatives. For each of the eight basic patterns there are three gradations, the first two falling within the "normal" or well-adjusted range of functioning: a = present, b = prominent, and c = mildly dysfunctional. For each of the disturbed derivatives there are two gradations: d = moderately disturbed and e = markedly disturbed. In addition, sociopathic indicators (z) are supplied for three of the basic personality patterns and for both derivatives.

Each of the eight mildly dysfunctional basic patterns and the two markedly disturbed variants generally corresponds to a DSM-III-R Axis II personality disorder. DSM codes are specified in parentheses. Equivalent DSM terms and codes are specified where relevant. Note that schizotypal personality (DSM code 301.22), a disturbed derivative of Millon's detached personality pattern, has been omitted from the taxonomy by virtue of its doubtful relevance to the study of political psychology.

Scale 1: Active-Independent (Controlling Pattern)

- a. Forceful
- b. Aggressive
- c. Sadistic
(Antisocial; 301.7)
- z. Antisocial/Hostile sociopath

Scale 2: Passive-Independent (Self-Asserting Pattern)

- a. Confident
- b. Self-centered/Egotistic
- c. Narcissistic (301.81)
- z. Exploitive sociopath

Scale 3: Active-Dependent (Outgoing Pattern)

- a. Sociable
- b. Gregarious
- c. Histrionic (301.50)
- z. Impulsive sociopath

Scale 4: Passive-Dependent (Agreeing Pattern)

- a. Cooperative
- b. Submissive
- c. Dependent (301.6)

Scale 5: Active-Ambivalent (Complaining Pattern)

- a. Sensitive/Reactive
- b. Negativistic
- c. Self-defeating/Masochistic
(Passive-aggressive; 301.94)

Scale 6: Passive-Ambivalent (Conforming Pattern)

- a. Respectful
- b. Regimented
- c. Compulsive
(Obsessive-compulsive; 301.4)

Scale 7: Active-Detached (Hesitating Pattern)

- a. Inhibited
- b. Withdrawn
- c. Avoidant (301.82)

Scale 8: Passive-Detached (Retiring Pattern)

- a. Introversive
- b. Asocial
- c. Schizoid (301.20)

Scale 9: Disturbed Independent/Passive-Ambivalent Pattern

- d. Suspicious
- e. Paranoid (301.0)
- z. Antisocial/Hostile or Exploitive sociopath

Scale 0: Disturbed Dependent/Active-Ambivalent Pattern

- d. Unstable
- e. Borderline (301.83)
- z. Impulsive sociopath